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ARMY Declass/Release Instructions On File

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BRIEFING

7 DEC.

1955

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BERLIN SITUATION

- I. East German capabilities for isolating West Berlin, without Soviet assistance, have significantly increased during past six years (since Soviet Berlin blockade, June '48 to May '49)
 - A. Besides East German army (KVP)--GDR now has both a border police organization (HDG-30,000) and an internal security force (M, 000).
 1. Some 3,000 HDG troops now stationed along Berlin borders (small, lightly equipped mobile units).
 2. 4,000 of internal security troops actually stationed within East Berlin.
 - B. These two forces, particularly if augmented by 5-6,000 KVP troops (including mechanized units) within 25 miles of Berlin, could isolate West Berlin against non-military attempts to supply it by road, rail, or air.

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C. East German capabilities to interfere with an air supply operation extremely limited, however.

1. GDR air arm (VDA) possesses only 105 planes (conventional trainers).

Thus, any Communist attempt to halt either air-lift or militarily-supported ground supply operation to Berlin would almost certainly require active participation of Soviet force.

2. 37,000 Soviet ground troops in immediate vicinity Berlin include three line divisions with supporting artillery units--ample to blockade or completely overrun West Berlin.

B. Total Allied strength in West Berlin is about 5,000, of which 3,200 are US.

1. ESER has 20 jet fighter regiments in East Germany--738 aircraft (of which at least 50 are all-weather fighters)--a force capable of insuring

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D. However, no significant reinforcement of either Soviet or East German forces around Berlin in recent months.

III. Recent increases in GDR pressure against Western position on Berlin, aimed at achievement recognition East German sovereignty, include threats to elevated system, canals, highways.

A. On 2 Dec, East Germans claimed extension jurisdiction over GDR-operated elevated railway system in Berlin, to include tracks and stations in West Berlin.

1. Probably no immediate intention, however, of severing service between East and West Berlin.

B. East Germans also demanding West Germany enter "ministerial level" discussions on barge traffic to Berlin.

1. Barges may be interfered with, and possibly stopped, at end of year unless Bonn agrees.

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C. On 5 Dec, East Germans announced that compulsory East German insurance would be required after 1 Jan '56 for all Western vehicles driven in East Germany.

1. Regulation will probably include East Berlin.
2. On basis "road-toll" precedent, East Germany could set insurance fees at exorbitant figure.

D. Finally, recent unconfirmed reports suggest coming East German attempt to charge tolls for Western aircraft's use of air corridors in Berlin.

1. These "air-toll" reports probably part of war of nerves.

IV. While likely that GDR will be quick to seize additional opportunities to harass the Western position in Berlin, as part of "sovereignty" campaign, US Army officials do not believe Communists contemplate overt use of force against West Berlin at present.

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